



The Continental Chronicle

REFLECTIONS: IMPACT ON FORESTS BY WASHINGTON'S ENCAMPMENT

As part of my responsibilities as a volunteer in natural resources, there is under development a slide show tentatively titled "The Biology of Valley Forge Before and After Washington's Encampment." The following is extracted from that material.

Wood was the basic building material of colonial days, and not just for homes and huts, but for the vehicles of the period: carriages, wagons, and carts. Wood was also essential for cook fires, baking ovens, hut heating, and fortifications. Any biological examination of the encampment of the Continental Army thus focuses primarily on trees.

Philadelphia was founded in 1681, but the history of Europeans along the lower Delaware River goes back to at least 1609. Thus, there was a long period prior to Washington's encampment that land clearing occurred and farming developed in the environs around Philadelphia. The Valley Forge area, when Washington's encampment took place, was a mixture of small farms and woodland.

Documents that have survived from the period seem to give conflicting views of the area. One soldier's report that has survived says, in part, "... we Turn'd into the woods about Sunset where we built us fires, and encamp't by them that night after Eating our Suppers of raw Corn, which we got out of a

field near by our encampment." Obviously there was farming underway in the area. But another report reads: "The ground selected for the encampment was covered with woods, and bounded in one side by the Schuylkill, on the other by ridges of hills ... "

The total amount of wood used for all purposes is believed to be about one billion board feet. This equates to 300,000 cords of wood, which, by my calculations, would be a stacking longer than football field, wider than a football field is long, and as tall as a 25-story building. It is estimated there were no trees remaining within a 2.5-mile radius of the encampment when it ended. The huts were left behind, most believed to be later scavenged for their lumber content. Farming quickly resumed in the area after the encampment.

Two lieutenants came back to the area in 1781 and reported of the huts, "... the greater part are decayed, some are split up into rails, and a number of fine fields are to be seen on the level ground that was cleared ... "

Farmer William Dewees petitioned Congress for relief for damages. Wrote Dewees in 1785, "... the greatest part of (my) standing Timber, & all (my) Fences, was, & were destroy'd, which deprived your Petitioner of Power to Erect New Buildings,



A campfollower tends a fire during the 2003 March Out program.

and rendered the Premises of less Vallue than they formerly were."

In 1828 John Fanning Watson wrote of the area's return to "now all in a wild wooden state." He described how the wood had been used and concluded with these lines: "all the rest of the fuel they consumed in ceaseless efforts to subdue the wintry cold - Poor Sufferers!"

Thus we find that after the encampment normal forest regeneration returned much of the area to its wooded nature, and farming resumed. - by Robert Ballantyne

Save These

Late 18th Century Women's and Children's Caps Workshop, Saturday, April 9, 10am-4pm, Education Center - Make your own cap! Registration \$20 for volunteers and staff, \$35 for public; includes supplies and lunch. Advance registration required.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, Sunday, April 17, 2pm-4pm, Education Center - Join us

in celebration of your volunteer contributions to Valley Forge NHP! Dinner will be catered and include an 18th Century pot luck dinner. Recipes are available for those who wish to contribute. Volunteers may dress in 18th Century clothing if they desire.

"For the Birds" Training, Saturday, April 30, 9:30am-1pm, Mill Grove Audubon Center - Take a closer look at the cultural heritage of birds and the sport of birding from the Revolutionary time period to the present.

Learn hands-on bird identification, techniques, and resources to share with the public. No experience is necessary. Attend additional classes on Sunday, May 15 (shadowing) and Saturday, June 4 (lead a bird walk) for advanced certification to lead bird walks as our volunteer. Program brochures will be mailed to all volunteers and staff in early April.

For more information on these activities, contact Michelle Ortwein at 610-783-1044 or michelle_ortwein@nps.gov.

Message from the Superintendent

I am honored to now be serving as the Superintendent of Valley Forge National Historical Park. Since I arrived in January I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you and I want to thank you all for the warm reception you have given me. In my short time here it is clear to me that Valley Forge National Historical Park has a very supportive and caring group of volunteers and for that I am very appreciative. I also want to thank former Superintendent Arthur Stewart for his devoted service to Valley Forge and the National Park Service. I know I speak on behalf of the entire staff and volunteers at Valley Forge in wishing Arthur good luck in his retirement.

This is a critical time for Valley Forge NHP, and like the other NPS units in the Northeast Region, we must focus on the following key areas:

- We must continue to build better **partnerships** that benefit everyone concerned.
- We must continue solid **business practices** to ensure not just fiscal responsibility, but fiscal survival.
- We must **refine our interpretive and educational programs** to stay abreast of current trends in scientific and historical thought.
- We must **communicate with our public** the role of the Park Service in caring for our nation's special places, and why our planning horizon is not measured in years, but in generations.

Over the course of the next few months the park will be working towards developing the final draft of its General Management Plan with the goal of making the plan available for public review this summer. This plan will be the cornerstone document that will guide the management direction of the park for the foreseeable future. The park will also continue to work in partnership with the American Revolution Center to develop a project that will meet the mutual objectives of the park and partner. The NPS sees great promise in the concept of the American Revolution Center and we will continue to devote considerable staff and financial resources to ensuring this effort moves forward. A key component of working towards project approval is the completion of a fundraising feasibility study that is now underway. I look forward to seeing you all in the park!

- Mike Caldwell

Softball Team Recruitment

With spring fast approaching, the park would like to form a softball team! The team will consist of park employees, volunteers, and spouses. This will be a great opportunity to get together and have some fun! We will compete against other parks. If you are interested, contact Karen Jones at 610-783-1037 or karen_jones@nps.gov

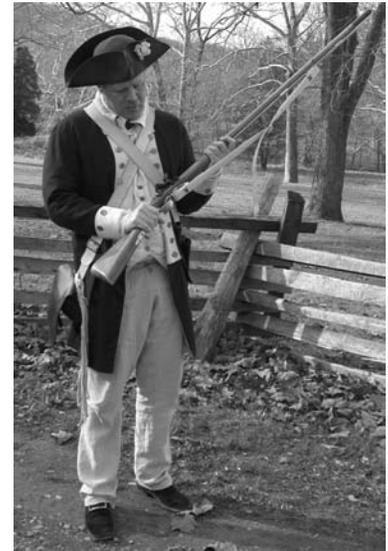
Valley Forge NHP Part of Revolutionary War Projects

As part of the ongoing efforts to celebrate the 225th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Northeast Region actively pursued several projects of benefit to multiple park sites. These projects include a general NPS handbook covering the entire American Revolution, an educational kit that can be used by any site with the Revolution as one of its primary themes, and a multi-day Teacher's Institute to be offered in July.

Valley Forge is part of all three of these efforts. The handbook is now in draft form and is being readied for publication. The handbook is meant for the general reader and includes essays by well known scholars including Gordon Wood, Gary Nash, Donald Higginbotham, Charlene Mires and others. Text and images highlight park sites and curatorial collections. Park staff are involved in many facets of bringing this publication to its final form. Interpretive rangers are suggesting feature topics, objects and images. Park archivist, Dona McDermott will be working with the editorial committee to prepare the final design package. Of course, the park and its collections will be interwoven throughout the publication.

The American Revolutionary War Education Kit is well along in production as well. This kit is modeled on the successful kit produced for Morristown NHP. However, this kit is meant as a useful tool for any classroom teacher engaged in bringing the stories of the American Revolution alive for their students. Valley Forge will be one of the case studies featured in the kit. Ranger Bill Troppman and Museum Specialist Scott Houting have been working with the writer/editor to feature the park and its collections. Both the kit and the handbook will be produced as sales items and be carried in bookstores throughout the NPS system.

This summer, the park is one of three key partners including the New York Historical Society and the American Revolution Center coming together to offer a 6 day teacher's institute focusing on the Revolution. The institute has been in the planning stages for about 18 months; funding and support have come from the ARC, the NYHS and the NPS. Teachers will participate in a "rolling workshop" spending time in New York City, Philadelphia, and Valley Forge. The



Interpretive Ranger Bill Troppman.

purpose of the institute is to assist teachers in using current scholarship, park sites and collections in their teaching. They will be developing lesson plans as part of the workshop that will be made available to teachers via the web and on a CD Rom. Applications will be available in the next few weeks for those interested.



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U.S. Department of the Interior

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Mike Caldwell: New Superintendent

Michael (Mike) Caldwell, a thirteen-year veteran of the National Park Service, became Superintendent of Valley Forge National Historical Park effective January 23, 2005.

Mr. Caldwell comes to Valley Forge from Fort Stanwix National Monument (NM) in Rome, New York, where he served the last three years as superintendent. While at Fort Stanwix NM Caldwell has been instrumental in leading the efforts to construct the Marinus Willett Center, slated for opening in June 2005. The \$6.4 million Willett Center will serve as the park's visitor center and museum collections storage area.

Mr. Caldwell said he is looking forward to taking on the hefty challenges facing Valley Forge. "Both my personal and professional background make the challenges very intriguing," he said. "I'm there to help the park move forward."

He said he believes in the power of the nation's parks to become the classrooms for the 21st century. At Fort Stanwix, site of a 1777 battle, teachers from local school districts updated all of the park's programs. "We were able to make them an integral part of the school experience," he said. "Third and fourth graders came in to learn about the American Revolution, first-graders came in to learn about colonial life, and seventh-grade math students came in to learn about engineering. "Our nation's history is our civic glue," he said. "Visits to places like Fort Stanwix and Valley Forge really contribute to that civic glue."

Mr. Caldwell was also able to make the fort part of the larger community by working with area businesses and historical organizations, officials said. "Philosophically, partnerships and collaboration are where the park service needs to go in the 21st century," he said. "We've got to look at innovative ways to meet our

mission."

In making the announcement, former Regional Director Marie Rust commented, "Mike Caldwell's strong background in development projects, partnerships, visitor services, public relations, and coalition building qualify him well for the opportunities and challenges ahead at Valley Forge National Historical Park. We are now poised to move ahead strongly on a number of fronts."



Mr. Caldwell also worked at Mesa Verde NP, the National Capitol Region office, National Mall in Washington, DC, Baltimore Parkway, Monocacy Battlefield, Lowell NHP, and New Bedford Whaling NHP.

M. Caldwell will move to the Valley Forge area with his wife Debbie and their 3 children.

Volunteer Spotlight



Name: Kathy King

Age: 51

City/Town you live in: Valley Forge-Mt. Misery

Family: Fiancé Mike Bertram and 2 stepsons in England

Occupation: Retired biochemist/chemical engineer

Special Interests/ Hobbies: I've traveled to 7 continents. I like to focus on hiking and outdoorsy stuff. We recently visited Korea, next we're going on a culinary tour of India.

How long have you been a volunteer at Valley Forge? In 4 years I've done a variety of projects for Valley Forge: invasive plant location and eradication, deer exclosure maintenance, planting trees along Valley Creek, helping with National Public Lands Day, National Trails Day, and Martin Luther King Day projects, digitizing historic photographs, spinning demonstrations at different VF programs. I've also given talk for the Friends of Valley Forge on Colonial Spinning and Weaving, and on Smuggling. Each year we also participate in the Audubon Christmas bird count on Mt. Misery. I like volunteering at

Valley Forge because there is a great variety of work to participate in.

Why did you decide to become a volunteer? I used to volunteer for The Nature Conservancy and would drive an hour or more to volunteer. Then I decided I could do the same thing in my backyard at Valley Forge. We say that our house is on 26,002.2 acres (which includes park land). I like to play outdoors.

What is the most interesting thing you have done in your life? Experiencing an earthquake while staying at an almost abandoned Russian research base in Antarctica.

What is the one thing that you'd like to do or try? I've been lucky to fulfill most of my wishes. I'd like to visit Iceland, and go to New Zealand again. I'd like to keep learning things such as drawing, bobbin lace, and weaving.

Where did you grow up? I grew up in Tidioute, a small town in northwestern PA. Mike's and my first date was in the park, walking the bike trail. We chose to live here because we wanted a good place for trail running, no lawn, few neighbors, and plenty of critters to watch. Since moving to Valley Forge, I found out Col. William DeWees is my ancestor, so I'm even more interested in Valley Forge history now.

If you could invite anyone to dinner, who would it be? Ben Franklin because he was involved in so many different things.

Take the Path to a Healthier You

National Trails Day brings greater awareness to trails, along with their many benefits and pleasures. National Trails Day is the only nationwide trails celebration, bringing together thousands of outdoor enthusiasts to participate in educational exhibits, gear demonstrations,

National Trails Day®



June 4, 2005

instructional workshops and trail work projects on the first Saturday of June. It provides an opportunity to thank the volunteers for their support in developing and maintaining trails. National Trails Day is also a great chance for families to enjoy their favorite trails together; trails have something for everyone!

Join us at Valley Forge National Historical Park to celebrate National Trails Day on Saturday, June 4, 2005. To learn more details or to volunteer, give us a call at 610 783-1044 or check out our website at www.nps.gov/vafo this spring.

Volunteers-In-Parks Coordinator Valley Forge National Historical Park

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www.nps.gov/vafo Click on "Volunteer"

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Capture and Become a Part of Valley Forge History

Have you ever wondered if you will be remembered in history or if you have left your mark on the world? If so, then we have the right job for you. Valley Forge NHP is looking for volunteers to help capture our history on film. You don't have to be an expert in photography to help out, just willing to take photographs of the park and our special events. The park will supply the camera equipment (35mm and digital). If you don't know how to take a good picture, we will be

glad to train you. This is an opportunity not only to help out and learn, but to leave your mark in history and become a true part of it as well. The pictures you take will be used to document our history and events in the park. They will be used in publications, newspaper articles, exhibits, and on our website. If you're interested in learning more about the photographic documentation program, please contact Ronald Boice at 610-783-1079 or ronald_boice@nps.gov.

Martin Luther King Day: A Day On, Not a Day Off



Volunteers who helped to clean up the Train Station on Martin Luther King Holiday.

For hundreds of thousands of Americans across the country, January 17 was a day "on" for service—not just a day off from work—as they honor Martin Luther King Jr. by engaging in service activities for their communities and neighbors. This year marks the 10th anniversary of observing the King Holiday as a day of service. In 1994, Congress passed legislation encouraging Americans to celebrate the King Holiday as a day of service reflecting Dr. King's life and teachings.

This year Valley Forge National Historical Park held a *Community Service Day* at the park. Local residents honored the legacy of Dr. King by sharing their energy and time to assist park staff with clean up projects at the Train Station and marking numbers on museum artifacts.

AmeriCorps Comes to Valley Forge

In early January, a group of AmeriCorps VISTA members spent a day at Valley Forge NHP volunteering, sharing their talent and energy, conducting inspections of and making repairs to deer proof fencing, and protecting young spruce trees from deer browsing along the Glenn Hardie Tree Screen.

AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs that engage more than 50,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. AmeriCorps members serve through more than 2,100 nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-

based organizations. To learn more about them, visit <http://www.americorps.org/>.



Ernestine White, Valley Forge NHP Trail Supervisor, works with AmeriCorps VISTA members to repair fencing along the Glenn Hardie Tree Screen.